



Methods to Receive Weather Warning Information

When disaster strikes, you may have only a short time to make what might be a life or death decision. One of the most important things you can do is to be aware that a danger is present. Most of the injuries and deaths happen to people who are unaware or uninformed. For this reason, **it is crucial that you have multiple ways to receive warning information.**

- **NOAA All-Hazards Radio** A NOAA All-Hazards radio receives broadcasts exclusively from the National Weather Service. The radio can provide rapid warning, direct from the source, when hazardous weather conditions pose a threat to life and property. For more information please visit <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/top/?n=nwr>

- **Television and Radio** Broadcast television and radio stations are a vital component of our warning system. Local television and radio stations routinely broadcast official "Watches" and "Warnings" issued by the National Weather Service as well as forecasts and storm tracks developed by on-air meteorologists. Television, in particular, is an excellent source of emergency information since graphics such as radar displays and maps can be used to describe the event in detail. Broadcast television and radio, while being an excellent source of information, have one major disadvantage as a means of receiving warning. Your radio or television has to be on and you have to be able to hear it or see it. If the TV or radio is not on or you are in another room, you will probably miss the warning. A normal TV or radio will not wake you up in the middle of the night to inform you that a tornado warning has been issued. For this reason, you should not rely on broadcast television or radio as your sole source of emergency warning.



- **Emergency Notification Via Mobile Device**

- **Wireless Emergency Alerts** Wireless Emergency Alerts (or WEA) are emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through your mobile carrier. Types of weather warnings that you may receive from the National Weather Service include: Tornado Warnings, Extreme Wind Warnings, Flash Flood Warnings, Hurricane Warnings, Blizzard Warnings, Ice Storm Warnings, and Dust Storm Warnings. In addition to weather warnings, other government messages issued include local emergency messages requiring evacuation or immediate action, AMBER alerts, and Presidential Alerts during a national emergency. If you are traveling, WEA will send you messages if you enter into an area that has previously received an alert. Similar to emergency weather alerts seen on local TV, WEA are broadcast from area cell towers to mobile devices in the area. The cost is free and no registration is required. For more information on this service, visit the following website:
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/wea.html>



Some Counties and many private companies offer a call service or text-based message service that provides severe weather watches and warnings based on your selected ZIP Code or geographic location. This can be a very helpful service, providing you with emergency information even if you are out of your home or out of siren range and especially if you are sleeping. For more information simply perform an internet search for "weather warnings via mobile devices" along with your



Methods to Receive Weather Warning Information **Continued...**

location to find a list of services available. You can also ask your local county Emergency Manager if any similar services are provided in your county.

- **Outdoor Sirens** First, sirens are designed to alert individuals who are outdoors. Sirens are not intended to alert people who are in cars, homes, or other buildings. Hearing sirens indoors may have been possible in the past, however, this should no longer be expected. Energy conservation practices and better insulation have effectively reduced the sound penetration into these areas. They are an outdoor alerting device and should be used as such.





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Summary

The warning system can only be effective if you understand the benefits and limitations of the alerting methods available. There are a great deal of warning devices and methods available to you. We recommend that you take advantage of as many of them as possible. No one warning method is perfect and no one warning method can be guaranteed never to fail. By relying on one single method, such as the sounding of the sirens or the receiving information solely from broadcast meteorologists, you risk missing a warning if that system fails. By taking a systematic approach and getting information from more than one source, you are much more likely to receive the warning, even if there is a failure in one of the components.

We strongly recommend that you consider the following:

- Purchase a weather alert radio if you don't already have one.
- Most cell phone devices will offer Wireless Emergency Alerts to be sent automatically to your phone without registration required. Keep in mind though they **DO NOT** send severe thunderstorm warnings, severe or winter weather watches, or advisories. If you are interested in receiving these additional messages, please refer to the next recommendation.
- Subscribe to a calling service or SMS text based alerting system if you carry a mobile device.
- Rely on the sirens only for as a means of outdoor alert. If you hear them, seek out additional information as soon as possible.
- Turn to broadcast radio or television for critical details and follow-up information.

Let's all do our part to be as prepared and aware as we can as we head through the severe weather Season!

